

Felicia Hurley
Testimonial for 2017 Appropriations Committee
February 16th, 2017

In 2016 Writer's Block Ink, a non-profit community arts center, partnered up with Safe Futures, a woman's shelter in New London, CT. This partnership, Raising Voices Against Domestic Violence, received a grant to hold various weekend forums and workshops aimed at educating the public about domestic violence. Workshops included a clothes line project where participants designed their own t-shirts with their own messages relating to domestic violence. There were also creative writing, dance, and African drumming workshops provided.

I was the designated African percussion instructor. In the music room at ISAAC, an arts and communication middle school also in New London, magic happened. People from all different backgrounds gathered in a circle with provided African Percussion instruments on display including djembes, congas, shekeres, dununs, a balofone and much more. In this created sacred space I gave a brief history of Guinea West African drum and percussion, introduced all the instruments and their sounds, then taught three basic accompaniments for the rhythm Ku Ku.

I encouraged attendees to relax, enjoy and get in tune with their inner rhythm. I stressed that "Everyone can drum." I shared my own personal experiences with the healing and meditative effects of drumming. When drumming, the persistent mental chatter subsides and one can feel at peace and united with others. People shared how the drum circle gave them a creative outlet which in turn facilitates the healing process. I look forward to participate in this partnership again in 2017.